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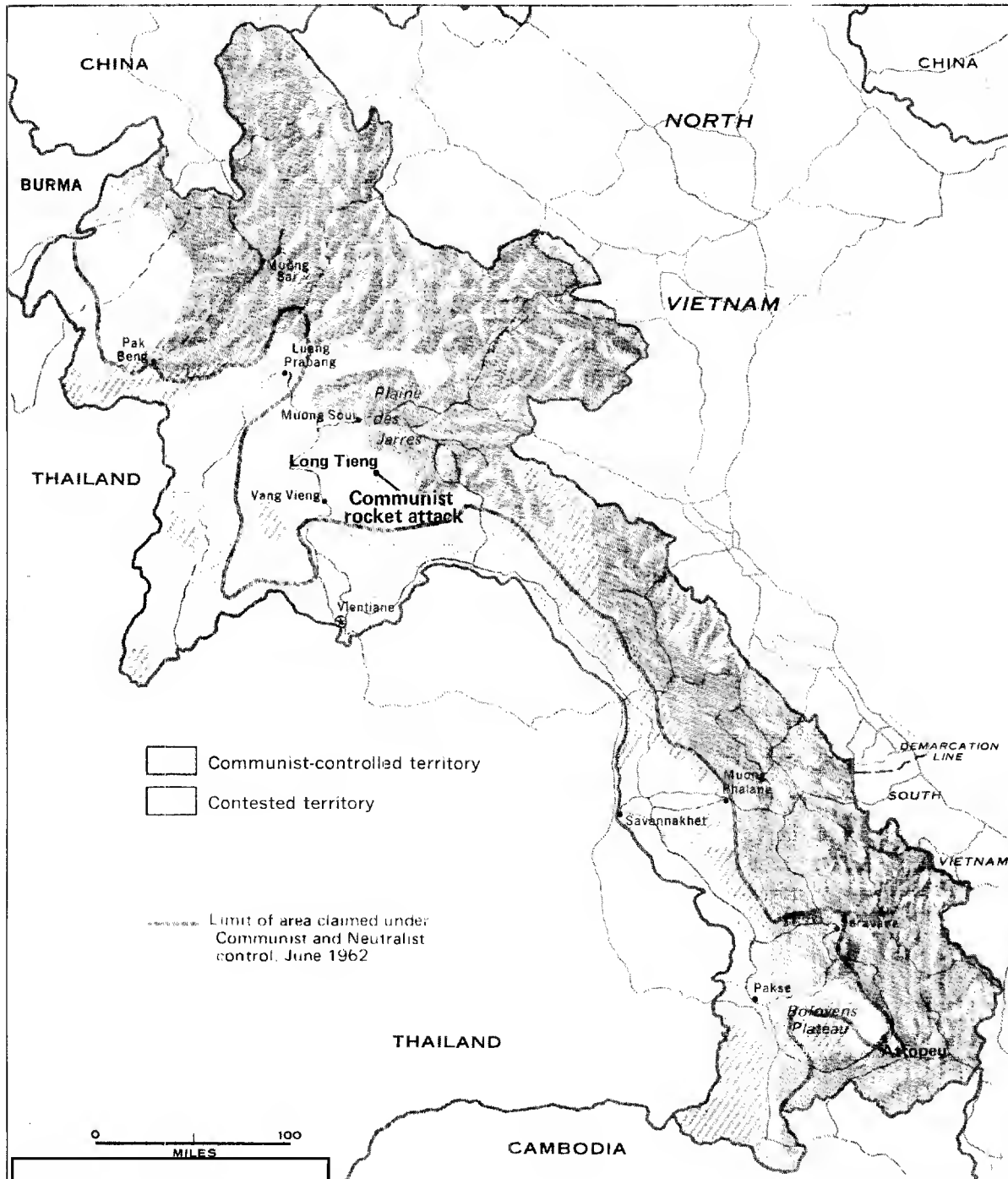
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Laos: Current Situation



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Laos: Communist forces have harassed Long Tieng with rocket fire, but no major fighting has been reported there or in the south.

The Meo stronghold was attacked with six 122-mm. rockets, but no loss of life or major damage occurred. Government forces from Long Tieng have had some success in the past two days consolidating their hold on high ground to the north, from where the Communists have been mounting their rocket attacks.

On the Bolovens Plateau overlooking Attapeu, a small Communist force continued to resist government efforts to recapture the key fire base lost on 29 April. Laotian troops reportedly got close to the base's defensive perimeter early on 1 May, but were withdrawn to permit additional air strikes. No effort has been made to retake the town of Attapeu and little is known of its condition or the size of the enemy force there.

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South Vietnam: Communist forces in I and IV Corps have stepped up their attacks, possibly indicating the beginning of the anticipated May phase of their 1970 spring campaign.

Following a series of shellings of allied military targets in the four northernmost provinces early on 30 April, the enemy initiated some 61 incidents in IV Corps during the night of 30 April. While this total is considerably lower than the number which opened the first phase of the offensive in the delta provinces at the end of March, the targets struck were similar, with remote military outposts accounting for about 75 percent and district towns for ten percent.

Preliminary reports also indicate that enemy action in I Corps was still high early on 1 May; so far II and III Corps remain relatively quiet. The pattern of preparations for this phase suggests that there will be less coordination than last month, with operations taking place as each unit completes its preparations. [REDACTED]

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France-UK: British and French officials are optimistic over the progress of the Concorde SST flight test program.

The British are now installing more powerful engines on the UK-produced Concorde prototype and plan to begin Mach 2 flight tests later this month. The highest sustained speed flown thus far was Mach 1.5, which was achieved by the French-built prototype. France also plans to begin Mach 2 tests within the next two months. The tests are expected to answer many of the questions concerning the economic feasibility of the Concorde's operation.

The two governments have so far spent about \$975 million on the Concorde project. An additional \$800 million probably will be spent before production begins. The French and British manufacturers presently estimate the unit price of the aircraft at \$19.5 million. The two companies point out, however, that the price may be higher when contract negotiations with the airlines begin this summer. Some 16 airlines hold options to purchase 74 Concorde; more than one half are for US airlines.

The Concorde is not without its technical problems, the most intractable being excessive weight and noise. The weight difficulty is largely a result of unanticipated changes and additions to the structure and equipment--problems normally encountered in the development of an aircraft incorporating new technology. Reduction in planned passenger load from the original 140 to about 120 has not alleviated the weight problem. The manufacturers still have not found a solution to the noise difficulties.

Nevertheless, the French and British governments remain enthusiastic about the Concorde. While it may not ultimately be an economic success, it probably will go into production and enter at least limited service, now scheduled to begin in 1973.

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Chile: The exposure of a group of army personnel who were instructing extreme leftists in guerilla tactics could lead to internal military changes.

Two officers, one of whom is a relative of the leader of the Movement of the Revolutionary Left (MIR), and 12 enlisted men have been detained. They are accused of involvement with "civilian clandestine movements" and other nonmilitary activities. The fact that the officers are members of an elite airborne special forces unit has shocked the Chilean military community and may mean an investigation of assignments to the elite corps.

The MIR is responsible for much of the terrorism that has taken place in Chile during the past several years. The people being trained apparently were from a group organized by the MIR.

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Malaysia: A nervous Malaysian Government is trying to forestall violence on the 13 May anniversary of last year's postelection communal riots.

Although the atmosphere in West Malaysia is not so highly charged as it was last year, the government, while trying hard to damp down rumors of impending violence, is also taking contingency security measures. Kuala Lumpur has reportedly issued emergency curfew passes to security forces, may have denied leave to government officials, and arrested at least seven people last week on charges of spreading rumors.

The Communists are as usual being depicted as the source of the potential troubles. Since most of the Communists are Chinese, the Chinese community in general is included in these allegations. Even Prime Minister Rahman, usually more conciliatory toward the Chinese community than many of his Malay colleagues, has been making anti-Chinese statements.

The appearance of Communist pamphlets and the setting of booby traps throughout West Malaysia and Singapore in late April marked the 40th anniversary of the Malayan Communist Party. The organizational ability demonstrated by these actions has obviously increased the government's fears that further unrest may be in the offing.

If Malay-Chinese rioting erupts again this May, the Chinese would receive the worst of it as they did in 1969.

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IAEA: In an apparent attempt to isolate EURATOM, the East European states are moving toward negotiations with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on safeguards agreements.

Poland has informed the IAEA that it would like to enter into talks as soon as possible on the safeguards agreement required by the Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT), which is intended to prevent the diversion of fissionable material from peaceful uses. The Polish statement--the first of its kind since the NPT entered into force--noted that all the Warsaw Pact nations had adhered to the treaty, but that none of the six EURATOM countries has yet ratified it.

NPT adherents are not required to begin the safeguards negotiations until 1 September, but the Soviets have said that other "socialist" countries would soon follow the Polish lead. It was suggested that Western governments--particularly Denmark, Norway, and Canada--be urged to do likewise.

The East European moves appear intended to induce other nations to accept the model agreement. A rush toward ratification would not only undermine the IAEA safeguards committee, but would also pose negotiating problems for EURATOM members, who oppose any agreement that would infringe on their own safeguards system.

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USSR: The extensive use of Western technology in Moscow's giant new television center points up the Soviet lag in civilian electronics.

The complex, which is nearing completion after six years of construction, will originate programs for the Moscow area that will be transmitted throughout the country via Molniya satellite. During a recent tour of the facility by US Embassy personnel, the chief engineer revealed that video-tape is purchased in Western Europe under US license "because the Soviet chemical industry lags far behind the US." Moreover, he admitted that the color television equipment is French and that some of the black and white TV equipment was purchased abroad, allegedly because Soviet electronic enterprises "defaulted on delivery."

The Soviet electronic industry has been developing video-tape and color TV equipment for more than ten years but has consistently failed to convert laboratory successes into commercial production. The Soviets have tried to resolve their color TV problem by adopting the French Secam color system and by importing French equipment. They have attempted to acquire Western technology for the manufacture of video-tape but have been thwarted by trade restrictions.

The Soviet engineer's most surprising admission was that some black and white equipment has been imported from the West. This technology has been extensively developed in the USSR. The most plausible explanation for the purchase of Western black and white equipment is that the low quality of Soviet equipment makes it unsuitable for the showcase Moscow facility.

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NOTE

Bolivia: The possibility of kidnappings is causing mounting concern in the La Paz diplomatic community. The government's statements that it will protect foreign diplomats have done little to allay the fears, since the government admits it lacks the resources for effective security precautions. [REDACTED]

Regis Debray and others jailed for participating in "Che" Guevara's ill-fated guerrilla campaign present a very attractive ransom for potential kidnapers.

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